

GREEN VILLAGE - STREET VILLAGES - OXGANG

THE LINEAR SETTLEMENT AS ONE FORM OF INLAND COLONIZATION

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THORPE's paper has made the Durham-green villages so well known that often the green village is thought of as a settlement form peculiar to that county. This however is easily disproved by STAMP's map<sup>1/</sup> which also refutes any explanation of the green that relies on local or regional factors, be they ethnic or historic.

Fresh field observation produced a fundamentally different lead: A great number of green villages in Co. Durham feature a "social asymmetry" which shows up in their groundplan /plot size/ as well as in their building substance. One side of the green is lined with farmsteads belonging to small or medium-sized farms. More open in appearance, it contrasts markedly with the compact row of cottages on the poopsite side. Now, the farmsteads can not be later than enclosure time which, in Co. Durham, means the period from late 15th to late 17th centuries. Rather, the lay-out of two villages suggested that today's social asymmetry was conditioned by a pattern definitely pre-dating enclosure. At the back of their cottage rows are narrow strip plots used as garden or field, and these plots abut in one straight line upon Middridge's former common and the Cockfield common still functioning as such.

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1/ STAMP, L.D.: The Common Lands and Village Greens of England and Wales. Fig. 4.: The Distribution of Village Greens, 1961 in: Geog. Jn. Vol. 130, 4, 1964

Thus, field observation pointed to a pattern of farms aligned on one side of the green; the green itself is, of course, commonage and appeared in two instances divided off the main common by just a row of cottages. On turning to the records, not only were these findings fully borne out but were, moreover, given a systematic meaning. I shall here summarize but the Grindon evidence as it is the main aim of this paper to review the Durham results in their wider context of Germanic Europe.

Co. Durham belongs to the early-enclosed parts of England where no other mode but enclosure-by-agreement could be used. Both this mode and the frequent presence of frecholders were strongly conducive to preserving as many elements of the previous pattern as were compatible with the aims of enclosure. Though enclosure maps are lacking, the point is easily proved by comparing pre-enclosure property lists with enclosure awards. And it is supported by BERESFORD's short list of only seven lost villages in Co. Durham, including Grindon. As it turned out, Grindon was really a case of resettlement.

In 1957, at the time of enclosure, Grindon consisted of three farms and twelve cottages, the church and the vicarage. The oldest parts of the church had rubble masonry of probably pre-Norman date, and the very small size of the manor also pointed to survival from the pre-Norman order. - In conjunction with the manor's size the location of the old village made resettlement of the cottagers unavoidable. For if enclosure was to create three consolidated holdings, the former common and the arable had to be lumped together. But the old village was located exactly between the two areas, on the edge of its arable and fronting onto the common /Fig. 1/.

Grindon represented a type location.

The pre-enclosure village plan combined alignment - of three farms strung out along a road plus the church at one end - with a church green. With but three farms and these, moreover, aligned, Grindon's size remained rather worrying. As there is no Domesday Survey for Co. Durham against which to check, further settlements had to be analysed until it could no longer be doubted that

Grindon had a type size.

The Durham-Urdorf, then, was a row of three farms, frequently plus either church or noble seat. Considering the overall circumstances, this accords well with the Domesday evidence for Yorkshire, a county much better endowed than Durham. Even so, in 1086, Yorkshire too was noted for its many but, compared to SE-England, small villages. With six farms Wheldrake had the typical size - and also form. Eleventh century Wheldrake was a string of six farms /Fig. 2/ - another linear settlement. But Wheldrake was soon to grow into a street village, not a green village.

Point 1: The green village is NOT a primary form of rural settlement. Neither in England, NW-Germany and S-Sweden nor in East Elbian Germany.

With regard to the latter, a cautionary note is due as there is now no chance for re-analysing the documentary evidence. One can but look afresh at what has been published, for instance by KRENZLIN /1952/<sup>1/</sup>.

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1/ Unfortunately, most of the historic plans are reproduced rather badly. There are, however, clear cases of social asymmetry, of linear settlements fronting onto remnants of commonage, sometimes with small plots intervening between these and the green.

Point 2: Both street village and green village originated from the same root, their common primary form being a string of farmsteads = HOFREIHE.

The decisive factors that directed later growth into either a street village or a green village were both physical and legal.

When a clearing is made in woodland, crops have to be protected against wild animals as well as the colonists' cattle on the woodpasture. A tun/Zaun being necessary, there was but the choice between fencing the arable or fencing the commons; in either case the tun had a bearing on the future shape of the dwelling place.

Where the commons was fenced and the Hofreihe had a borderline location like Grindon or Byers /Fig. 3/, a strip of open commonage had to be left in front of the farmsteads to give access. The green = Anger was a functional necessity and NOT a primary planning feature like a town square. Physically part and parcel of the wasta but left outside the commonage fence, the green retained the legal quality of a commons and still does so unless enclosure has interfered. In consequence, for as long as oxgang/hube or toft carried special legal qualities incompatible with those of a commons, a farmstead could not be placed on the green. New farmsteads either condensed an existing Hofreihe or elongated it. Because of lesser status cottages posed no problem on the green and they would least interfere when put up along the fence.

Eyers Green was unfortunate in fronting onto a common shared by several townships and not carved up until 1806. Most places gained a village common in high or late medieval times and could then more freely decide on the best use of it. If they converted the "foreland" into permanent arable, the borderlinelocated Hofreihe attained a central position in the arable.

Yet, like Dunum in Ostfriesland /Fig. 4./, it could still remain a Hofreihe-cum-green. Toagarp in Scania /Fig. 5/ grew into a green village later on and others may have seen planned growth simultaneous with the expansion of their arable, so possibly Ardorf/Ostfriesland /Fig. 6/ or Mallnow in Eastern Brandenburg /Fig. 7/. While in these cases the commons fence remained a boundary line, it was also possible for the commons fence to be overcome both physically and legally. Wheldrake from a Hofreihe developed into a double line street village.

Point 3: The problem of alignment. That three farmsteads or even six should stand in a more or less orderly row, looks rather strange at first. It becomes fully plausible, however, when the legal and technical aspects of woodland colonization are taken into account. The first act on creating a new settlement was the drawing of a base line along which to apportion the land. For it was the width rather than the area of land that was measured. From the base line clearance would then proceed in one direction and the first shelters be located somewhere near that line. Only the oxgang/hube /which in some regions also covered the toft/ was the colonist's private property while "wastes and commonities were no part of the oxgang". His farmstead, therefore, had to be on the ox-

gang-land, or, at least, join onto it but then as a special enclosure.

Point 4: The Hofreihe was a timeless form. Byers in the 12th century was founded to the same principles as the village X of the Vita /c.721/ where it describes St. Cuthbert's /c.634-687/ journeys in Northumbria. The one difference to be expected concerns the lay-out and size of their arable bearing in mind the transition from the hube of early to the Hufe of high medieval times.

As the Hofreihe from the context of the Vita appears as a then normal feature, it can, no doubt, be back-dated to the 6th century, that is the beginning of systematic colonization in the North. For Southern England, colonized somewhat earlier, a fifth century date should not be ruled out. Not much later dates one would expect from Northern France. - In S-Sweden, ANDERSSON /1959/ refers the Undorf to Bolskifte times, i.e. the latter part of the Migration Period and early Viking Age.

Remains Germany. Settlement analysis has, so far, concentrated mainly on the northern and central regions and patterns correspond well. But neither Dunum, Ardorf, nor, in fact, any settlement of whatever shape can be pushed beyond the 9th century deadline. Exceptions like the Ostgeistreihe /Fig. 8/ only prove the rule<sup>1/</sup>. Close analysis revealed

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1/ In N-Germany the dating deadline is most probably due to late Franconization and territorial organization /Grundherrschaft/. Only the alluvial lowland saw earlier infiltration of Franconian influences; the Ostgeist is now included in Münster. - Besides this real cause, a research gap may also contribute to our dating problem. The hube and the organization of Grossmarken/intercommons have, so far, received too little attention. Comparison of, for instance, the Ardorf, Mauers and Reichenbuch plans suggests these to be promising lines for future research.

that the ostgeist-Reihe in the 8th century consisted of three farms + a Schulzen seat.

Point 5: The Urdorf, established for Scania by ANDERSSON, was a feature common to all Germanic Europe and, perhaps, beyond

Besides the single farmstead, two group lay-outs only can be accepted as primary forms of rural settlement in Germanic Europe: hamlet/Weiler and Hofreihe. All others must be considered secondary, if not tertiary derived forms.

It was a small-scale beginning. Whether Mauers in E-Hessia, Reichenbuch in Württemberg or Betchworth in Surrey to name some hamlets, whether a curved Hofreihe like Dalitz /Hannover-Wendland/ or the straight Hofreihen Dunum, Ardorf, Ostgeist, Mecklenbeck, Tägarp, Virrestad, Grindon, Byers etc. - they all commenced with three farmsteads, often pluss either church or noble's seat.

Grouped or aligned, the small-scale beginning was suited to all possible natural conditions. Also, at a time of low population pressure, it ensured a first hold on relative large areas to be strengthened later on by successive waves of daughter settlements. Subsequent growth of each village embryo was possible too but limited by physical and legal restraints.

A late foundation like Byers could but need not start at Urdorf-size. Where sufficient arable land and settlers were available, it might commence as a Hofreihe of si or more farms. In any case, the original location of the Hofreihe in relation to arable, commons, water and meadow or in relation to a legal boundary and fence proved the decisive factor in the subsequent evolution of the several Hofreihe-derived settlement forms.

Point 6: The Hofreihe was the tool of a systematic /woodland-/colonization.

Neither the Anglo-Saxon nor the Franconian or later the German colonizations were haphazard affairs. Initiated by kings, Slavic dukes, the established rulers in general, and with a political aim in mind, colonization was a planned process and clearly followed a set pattern. It was organized in several tiers, the settlers being led by a locator, often a junior member of the respective 'noble' class. Therefore the seat of a noble, a Schulze as frequent element, a type feature of the Hofreihe.

Point 7: The problem of the territorial framework.

If the colonization was not haphazard, woodland clearance must have proceeded within recognised bounds. Secondly, if wastes and commonities were not part of the oxgang, of what were they a part? Thirdly, as the Urdorf was far too small to function as an entirely independent community, there must have been a binding force, some form of organization.

For one, the Urkirchspiel/primary parish has long been recognised as a frame for inland colonization. It acted as such also in England. But the parish organization is comparatively late, coming into existence only after the change-over to Roman Christianity and rather slowly in England.

Preceding the parish organization, there were the Franconian Royal Forests and villicationes<sup>1/</sup>, the pagus and other

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1/ The importance of these units as organizational frames of the Franconian "state colonization" has been clearly established by NITZ in his Odenwald study /1962/.



territorial units which they were able to delineate clearly or roughly and which, in turn, must have stood in succession to an earlier organization. But, much as we know about their dissolution, practically nothing is known about the territorial origin of, for instance, the villicationes.

In England, apart from continuity lines since Roman times /e.g. FINBERG 1964/, there are instances, as Glanville JONES has never tired pointing-out, of Anglo-Saxons taking over without interlude a British lordship. But not sufficient evidence is forthcoming on the further point of now the Anglo-Saxons /re-/organized what they had inherited.

That such a territorial frame and organization existed one is constantly made aware of - but so elusively that it is impossible as yet to put a name to it. Until then it seems best to identify it with the intercommon/Grossmark /Zentralallmende/ which, in the present context, is also the most important feature.

While strategic aims could demand securing first the control lines by settlements along rivers, esp. at the fords, along Roman roads continuing in use and similar military roads /via regia/, the economic emphasis of colonization was on lowland in general, warm soils and valleys in particular. Basically, these were the old core areas, more or less long settled in varying density, and which were now expanded. Once these were firmly in hand, the concept apparently aimed at control of a fairly extensive woodland from an adjoining core district, usually the one with a river/rivolet as a natural route of ingress.

Going out from the core district, the exact principles followed in demarkating a particular woodland section remain, as yet, unknown. One topographic characteristic, however, turns up repeatedly and may establish part of the pattern: the section stretched up to the top a hill and further to the knick of the opposite flank. After successive waves of filiation, all sharing the intercommon, had eaten into the woodland, there would, in consequence, come a final leap across the intercommon and occupation of that knick. Byers several other places in county Durham have this location and so have three of the four villages founded in the 8th century by Franconian nobles from the Grabfeldgau with a leap over the central Rhön.

By the time of this final leap, the eldest villages, feeling too far removed from the intercommon also the passage of their herds to and fro causing frictions with the daughter settlements, had already started to press for a commons of their own. Creation of village commons began in the core areas as early as Carolingian times but elsewhere the process lasted well into the 13th century or longer. The Asbrook /Fig. 9/, for instance, was not partitioned among its then twelve member-villages until 1257. Typical of the last stage of an intercommon, only the villages immediately surrounding the Asbrook were still sharing it while older members further out had already become independent.

Point 8: The Hofreibe had a political implication. Its origin and spread were bound up with that of territorial lordship/Grundherrschaft, the fundament of early medieval statehood.

Franconian "state colonization" which had such an impact on Germany was no singularity. The Anglo-Saxons too pursued a

"state colonization" and England even preserves a legal record in the laws of Ines /c.690/, king of Wessex.

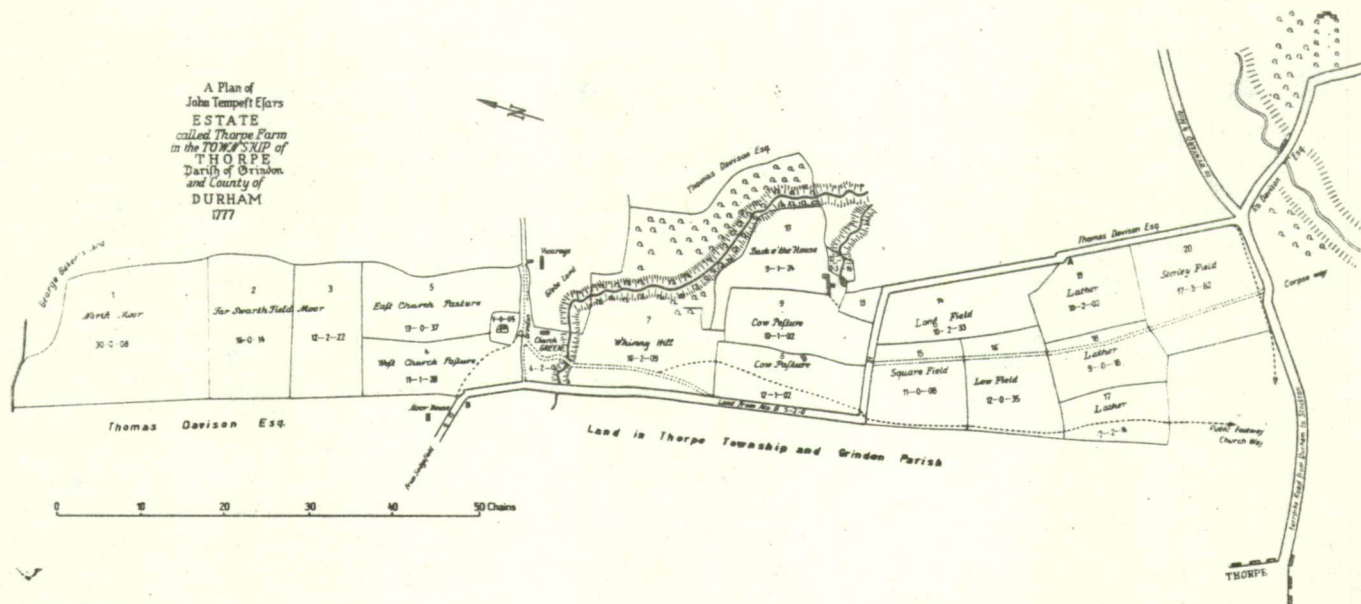
On the previous type of personal relations being supplanted by a real relation /legal sense/ vested in a particular piece of ground, social stratification based on landed property could perhaps develop quasi in situ. In most regions, though, it further took an immigrant superstructure /Herrschaftsbildung durch Überschichtung/ for territorial lordship to fully establish itself. Precisely because of that the Saxons, Eastfalians more so than Westfalians, fought the new order for so long.

Circumstances demanded of the Franconians to rely more heavily on time in the course of which the lesser /in the eyes of e.g. the Saxons/ right implanted with the new settlements would assimilate the older. The Anglo-Saxon colonization was far more thorough and resulted in a clean division. The uplands of Wales and Scotland were left to the older type of personal relations lordship which Ireland too retained while all other Britain was resettled and colonized and subjected to territorial lordship.

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County Record Office, Durham, LD/1918

Fig. 1

Die Zahlen geben den Flächeninhalt der eingetragenen Felder in acres, roods, perches an.

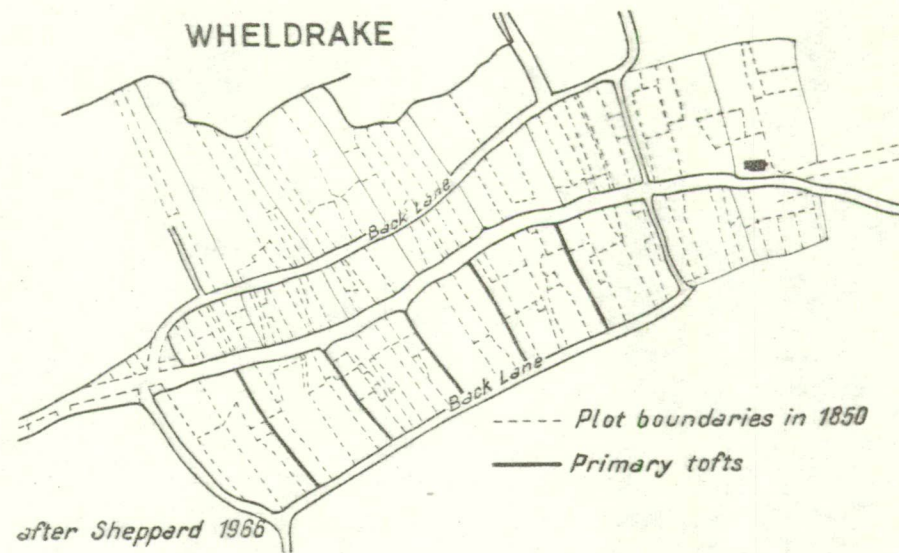


Fig. 2.

A horizontal scale bar with tick marks at 0, 5, 10, 15, and 20. The label 'Chains' is at the right end.





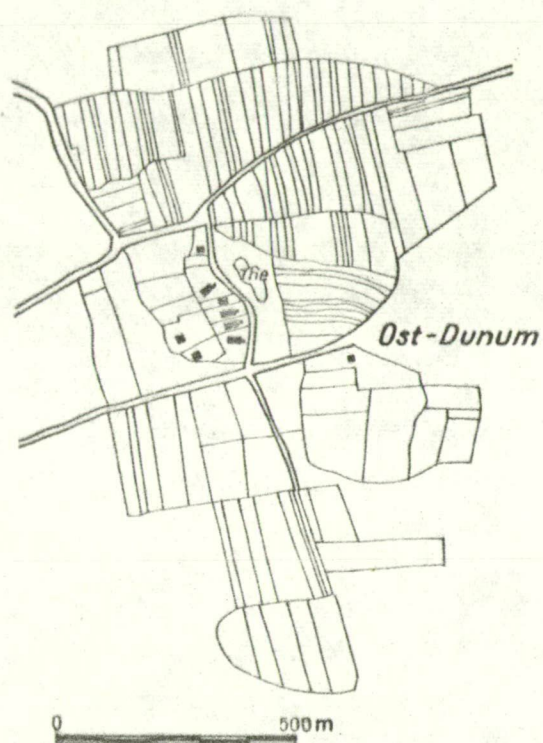
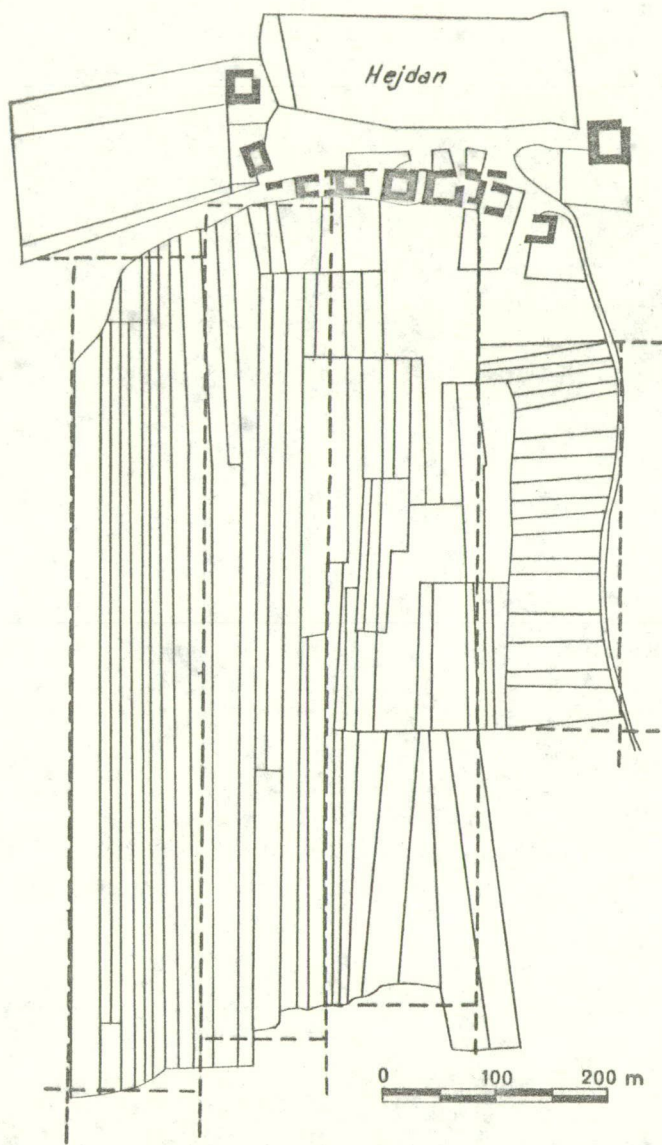


Fig. 4.

# GLEMMINGE - TÅGARP



after Andersson 1959

Fig. 5.

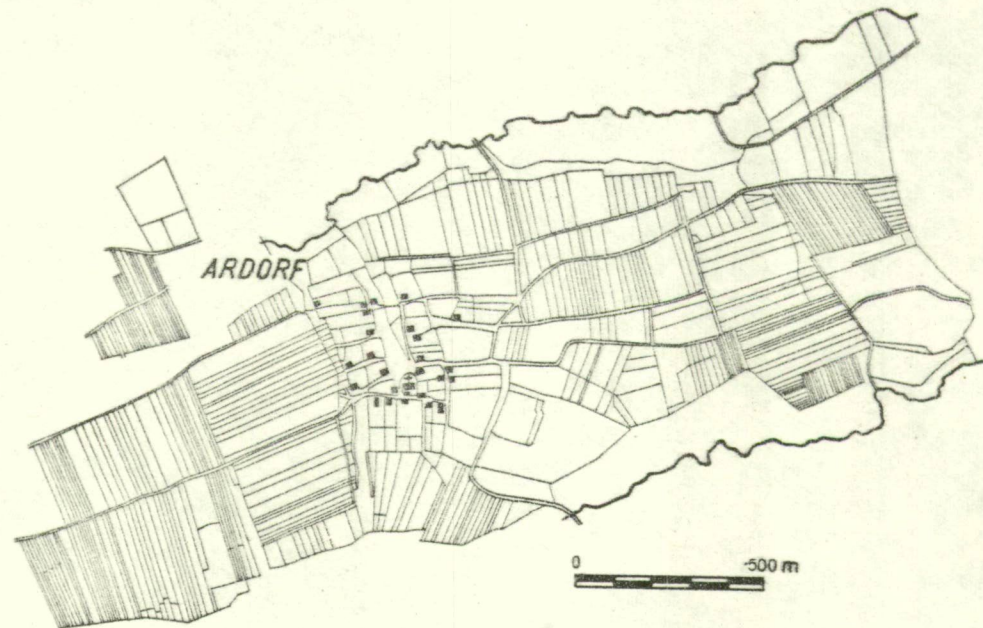
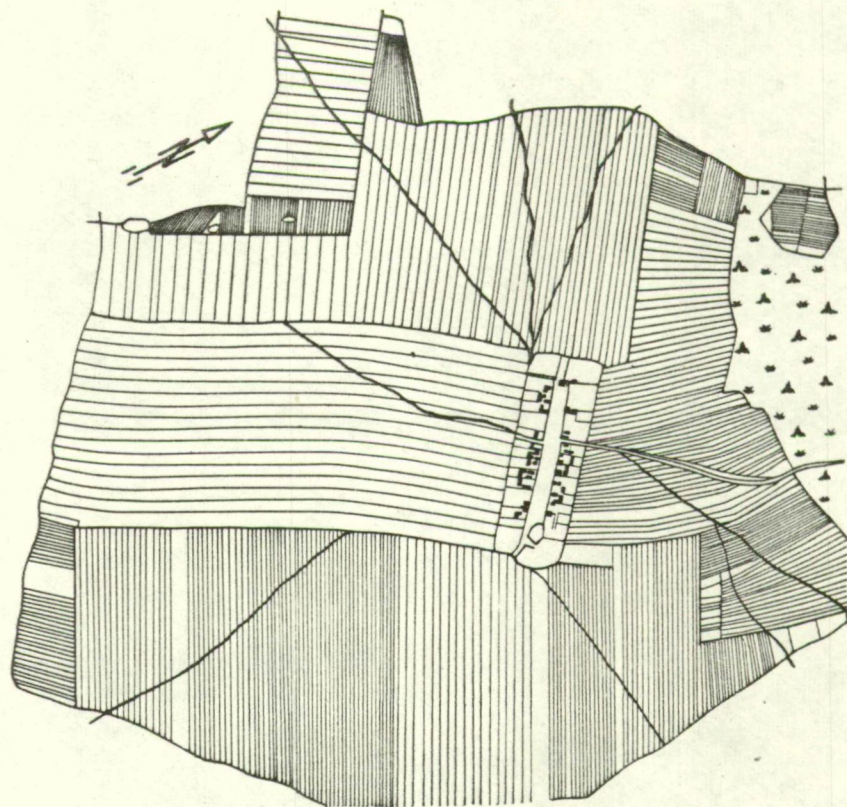


Fig. 6.

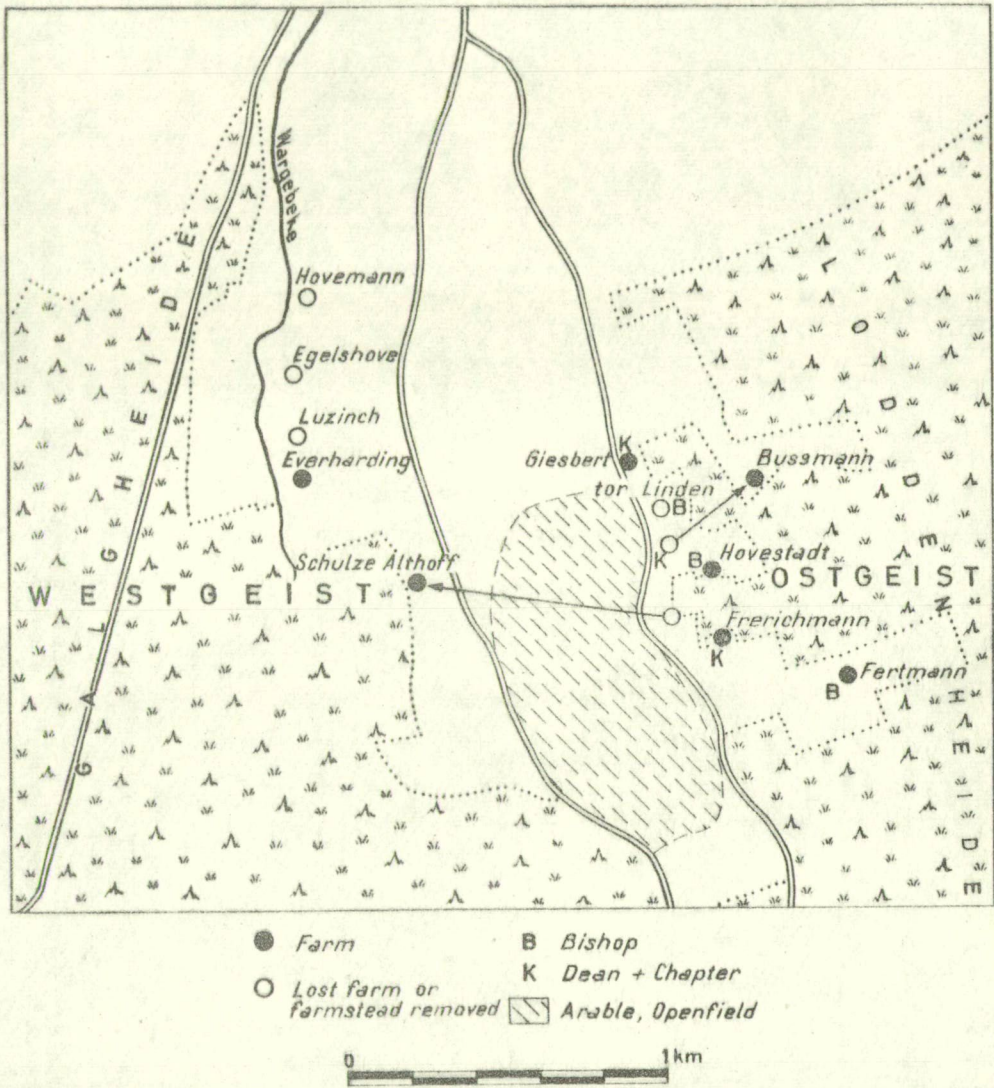




MALLNOW, EASTERN BRANDENBURG, IN 1727  
*after Krenzlin 1952*

Fig. 7

# THE OSTGEIST - HOFREIHE IN EARLY MEDIEVAL TIMES

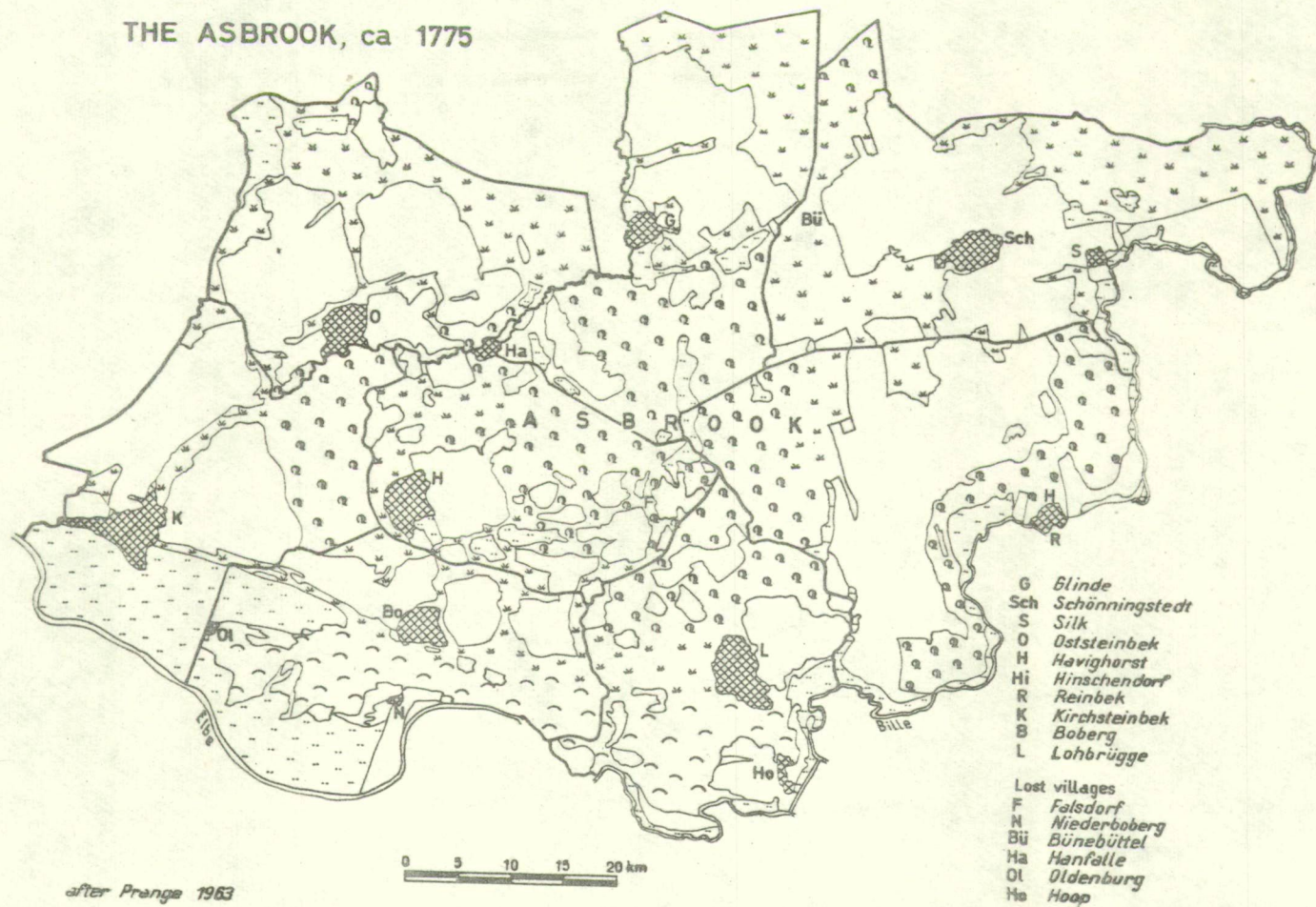


after Prinz 1960

Fig. 8.



# THE ASBROOK, ca 1775



after Prange 1963

Fig. 9.